

MORE PAGES OF YOUR FAVORITE COMIC CHARACTER

JAN. NO. 55

# ROCKY LANE

Featuring His Stallion

BLACK JACK

WESTERN

A FAWCETT PUBLICATION

10¢



SECRET MARSHAL LANE meets up with the

## DANGEROUS PAST!



# TIN-STAR TRICK

By John Martin



CADGE THURMAN'S chest felt as if it would burst. He'd been running for a whole hour, running while the alarm bell at the jail in Buckson clanged on. Busting out had been easy. The sheriff had been young enough, and inexperienced enough, to fall for that old trick about the prisoner feeling sick. Once he'd unlocked the cell, come in and bent over Thurman, he'd learned a lesson—the hard way. Up had come Cadge Thurman's lean, strong arm. And when it came down, it came down edgewise on the tin-star's neck.

Thurman's mouth twisted in derision as he remembered. It had been only an instant's work, after the tin-star fell unconscious, to grab his guns and light-stick at out the back way.

Speed had been necessary, and his escape vital. Another twenty-four hours and he'd have been the chief and only mourner at his own funeral in Boot Hill cemetery. It had been the Buckson sheriff who'd arrested him for killing the bank guard. It would also have been the sheriff who would have released the trap under him at the Buckson gallows.

But not now.

Cadge Thurman pumped down a gully, then turned abruptly to the left. A sudden snitch in his side halted him abruptly. His heart was pounding violently with the exertion. In the distance, not two hundred yards away, was the county line—and freedom. Under him his legs wobbled. He remembered, abruptly, that he wasn't as young as he used to be. Gasping, he tried to keep from falling, failed. With a crash, he brought up against two heavy bollards.

Cadge lay there. His heart slowly resumed its normal beating. The mist before his eyes cleared, and he found he could catch his breath. He tried to rise, as he thought of how close he was to freedom, how close he might be to losing it, panicked him. He knew the Buckson tin-star wouldn't have had much of a chance to rouse a posse that late at night. But he didn't know how long the lawman would stay knocked out.

Behind him, he heard hoofbeats. With a strangled curse he got to his feet, stood awaying. Then the hoofbeats stopped. Cadge paused. He knew he had to rest, but he knew that resting might be fatal. The memory of the moose that would tumble him into a grave on Boot Hill filled him with terror. Abruptly he started off again, down the gully, but a

rise and looked toward the top.

"All right, you lousy lobo—reach!"

The harsh words spun Cadge Thurman to the right.

"The sheriff!" he gasped hoarsely.

The Buckson tin-star stood at the top of the rise and chuckled. One hand held a gun on Cadge. The other ruefully massaged a sore neck.

"Thought you'd knocked me out for good, eh?" the tin-star said. "You didn't. But thanks, anyway, for the lesson, lobo. You probably figure, too, that I couldn't get a posse up this time of night. But I didn't have to, Thurman. There was only one way to safety and you had to take it. So did I. Only I knew you didn't have a horse. My own's been' shoed, so I borrowed one—and got here ahead of you."

With strange abruptness, terror fell from Cadge Thurman like a cloak. In the darkness, he smiled secretly. The young squint, he thought. With the comfortable pressure of the captured guns by his side in their holsters, he moved forward and up.

"Take it easy!" the tin-star said.

"Tim—I'm just wounded, Sheriff," Cadge gasped. "Been runnin' from you for a long time." His eyes narrowed and he scrambled once. Then he stumbled again, his right leg buckling toward the ground. Instantly his two guns were out of their holsters roaring bullets. In front of him, the sheriff, taken by surprise, staggered. The gun in his hand flew wide. Then he crumpled, with two slugs in the heart.

"Guess you won't have time to learn this lesson, sonny," Cadge said, grinning. He stood regarding the body for an instant. A plan formed quickly in his mind. Swiftly he rifled the body of its wallet, its tin star and the sheriff's papers of identification. Then, rolling the body back into the gully, he covered it with rocks. Nobody would know just where the sheriff was. It might be days before they found the body. In the meantime, on the sheriff's horse, he'd cross the county line, ride to Starbuck, a hundred miles away. At Starbuck was a bank. It would be easy for a sheriff to get into a bank.

Walking toward the tethered horse, Cadge Thurman chuckled as, move by move, his plan fell into place. This time, he wouldn't have to bust into a bank. He'd be invited in. This time he wouldn't be rushed. This time he

(Continued on inside back cover)



# ROCKY LANE WESTERN

Executive Editor  
WILL LIDBESON

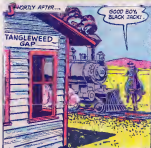
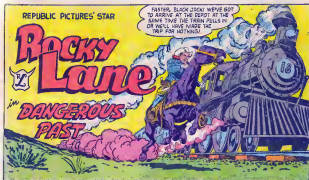
Editor  
V.A. PROVVISORO

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Every effort is made to insure that these comic magazines  
contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment.

*W. A. Fawcett, Jr., President*



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**T**HE NEXT DAY, IN THE HOT-100-DEGREE  
BULLET HOLE VALLEY TOWN...



WHEAT! UP,  
GAYLORD! YOU HAVEN'T TAKEN YOUR  
EYES OFF THAT PICTURE IN THE PAPER,  
SINCE YOU GOT IT!

ER, ER, NOTHING!  
JUST AN INTERESTING STORY  
ABOUT SOME RANCHER  
RETIRING!

THE HAIR IS GRAY, THE FACE IS  
OLDER, BUT I'D RECOGNIZE  
IT ANYWHERE!



**Bullet Hole Gazette**  
**WEALTHY RANCHER  
RETIRES**  
SURE LONDON, FOR WHOM THE  
TOWN OF LONDON WAS NAMED,  
SOLD HIS RANCH FOR \$500,000!  
HALF OF THE MONEY HE DONATED  
TO THE STATE POLICE BOARD.  
THE OTHER  
HALF HE  
INTENDS TO  
LIVE  
IN FOR  
THE REST  
OF HIS  
LIFE!



YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THE  
PLACE, SCOTTY! I'LL BE  
GONE FOR A DAY OR  
TWO!

OH, YEAH,  
BOSS!

**T**HE FOLLOWING DAY IN LONDON...



THANKS AGAIN, ROCKY, FOR BRINGING  
MY DAUGHTER SAFELY BACK TO ME!

I'M AFRAID  
THIS YOUNG LADY  
IS GOING TO WANT  
ALL THE YOUNG  
BOYS IN LONDON  
POPPING IN NO  
TIME!

OH, YEAH!



NOW THAT I'M BACK, I'VE  
GOT SO MANY THINGS TO DO  
I DON'T KNOW  
WHERE TO START!

IT'S ALWAYS  
BEST TO START  
BY SAYING  
HELLO TO YOUR  
OLD FRIENDS!



THAT'S A MIGHTY  
GOOD IDEA! BY  
THE WAY, WHERE  
WILL WE BE  
LIVING NOW  
THAT THE RANCH  
IS SOLD, PAPA?

RIGHT OVER IN THE  
HOTEL! AND MAKE  
SURE YOU'RE BACK  
IN TIME FOR  
DINNER!



I RECKON I'LL  
GO IN AND  
CATCH A FAST  
TWO-TWO  
WAGON!

OH, YEAH,  
DAD!

THAT SOUNDS  
LIKE A GOOD  
IDEA, LONDON!  
YOU MIGHT AS  
WELL MAKE THE  
MOST OF YOUR  
RETIREMENT!



**B**UT AS BURN LONDON ENTERS  
THE HOTEL...

ADD MORE  
PARDON, MR. LONDON, BUT A FRIEND  
OF MINE ARRIVED A SHORT WHILE  
AGO, AND SINCE YOU WERE OUT I  
SAW NO WAY IN LETTING HIM  
WAIT FOR HIM IN YOUR SUITE!

WHAT'S  
HIS NAME?



I DIDN'T BARELY CATCH IT!  
IT SOUNDED LIKE DOWLER  
OR FOWLER!

NO MATTER! I'LL SOON  
SEE WHO IT IS!



THE CLERK SAID A FRIEND  
WAS WAITING TO SEE ME, BUT  
I DON'T RECOGNIZE 'EM!



THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE! IT'S  
BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE  
LAST SAW EACH OTHER! ABOUT  
TWENTY YEARS! MAYBE IF  
I TELL YOU MY NAME,  
YOU'LL REMEMBER ME!



GAYLORD  
FOWLER!

GAYLORD FOWLER?  
(GULPS)



SO YOU DO REMEMBER! I THOUGHT  
YOU MIGHT! AFTER ALL, NOW COULD  
YOU FORGET THE MONEY  
AND SOME YOU BURNED INTO  
THE BURNED STAGECOACH  
SAFE AND CLEVER IT GOT...  
BUT AS YOU KNOW,  
I'VE NEVER SAID A  
WORD ABOUT IT!

WHAT BURNS  
YOU HAVE NOW  
AFTER ALL THIS  
TIME?



I ALWAYS HAD IT IN MIND TO  
GIVE YOU FOR A BIRTH DAY! BUT  
AS THE YEARS WENT BY, I LOST  
TRACK OF YOU! IF I HADN'T SEEN  
YOUR PICTURE IN THE BULLETIN  
WALL GAZETTE, I MIGHT HAVE  
FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOU  
ALTOGETHER!

GET TO THE  
POINT! WHAT DO  
YOU WANT?



JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING TO  
KEEP MY TONGUE QUIET  
OR ELSE I'LL HAVE TO GO TO  
THE LAW AND TELL WHAT I  
KNOW! IT WOULD ruin that  
REPUTATION YOU'VE BUILT UP  
IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION,  
GAYLORD, A FEW DAYS AFTER  
I STOLE THAT MONEY I REALIZED  
WHAT A MISTAKE I HAD MADE  
AND I SENT IT ALL BACK! THE  
REPUTATION I'VE BUILT UP AS  
I JUST THE TOWN LIP WITH  
MY OWN HANDS.  
I OWNED  
HONESTLY!



SENDING BACK THE  
MONEY YOU STOLE  
MAKES IT LESS OF A  
CRIME, BUT IT'S STILL  
A CRIME AND YOU  
NEVER PAID FOR IT!

I CAN SEE THERE'S NO  
POINT TRYING TO REASON  
WITH YOU! WHAT DO YOU  
WANT TO KEEP STILL?

# ROCKY LANE WESTERN







YOUR PERFORMANCE WAS SENSATIONAL AGAIN, ZUDA! IT WAS A LUCKY DAY FOR ME WHEN YOU WANDERED IN HERE ASKING FOR A JOE! AND REMEMBER, ANY DAY YOU WANT TO QUIT SINGING TO BECOME A GAYLORD POWER, WE HEART IS YOURS!

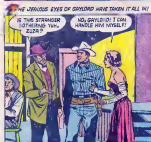
THANKS, GAYLORD! BUT I STILL NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME TO THINK IT OVER!



AND NO LATER THAT DAY...

THE IDEA TO EVERY MAN, GAYLORDNESS AND HOTEL IN BULLET HOLE AND STILL NO SIGN OF SUE! I KNOW THEY RENT OUT SOME ROOMS ON TOP OF THE SALOON, BUT I DOUT VERY MUCH IF SUE WOULD LIKE THEM!









SO THAT'S WHY DAD GAVE HIM THE MONEY! NOW WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? IF I SAVE ROCKY, HE'S GOING TO FIND OUT AND THAT MEANS DAD WILL GO TO JAIL! I SURE HAVE MESSY THINGS UP!



GOOD NIGHT, GOODBYE! I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW!

GOOD NIGHT!



THE SURE WAS A SAD-LOOKING EXPRESSION ON HER FACE! A FUTURE ROBBY... PARTICULARLY ONE WHO'S JUST BEEN SNAGGED FROM THE CLUTCHES OF A UNDOPE... SHOULD BE LOOKING HAPPY!

BUT HOW CAN SHE LOOK HAPPY?

WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO? SAVE A ROCKY AND LET DAD GO TO JAIL, OR BURY DAD'S PAST BY LETTING THEM BURY ROCKY!



WHY! I'VE GOT AN IDEA! HOW TO MAKE SURE NO ONE'S AROUND!



**S**HORTLY AFTER, AT THE BULLET-HOLE SALOON...

IT'S A LUCKY THING ROBBY FORGOT TO LOCK THIS WINDOW WHEN HE CLOSED UP THE PLACE FOR THE NIGHT! NOW TO GO DOWN AND OPEN THAT CURTAIN DOOR!



I KNOW I'VE ACTED LIKE A SILLY GIRL, ROCKY. I AM AWAY FROM HOME BECAUSE I HAD AN ARGUMENT WITH DAD! THEN I MADE THE MISTAKE OF TAKING A JOB HERE! BUT IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT WHERE YOU FOUND ME, AND WILL FORGET THE WHOLE INCIDENT, I'LL FREE YOU AND THEN YOU CAN TAKE ME HOME! WHAT DO YOU SAY?



I WAS HOPEING YOU'D SAY YES! NOW I'LL UNDO YOU!







# gopher face

"WHAT'S  
IN A  
NAME?"

YEAH, IT'S JUST LIKE BILL  
IN THIS COUNTRY!



HOWDY, PLINT!  
WHAT ARE YUH  
READING ABOUT?

THE LATEST CHANGE  
IN THE GOVERNMENT  
IN EGYPT!



IS  
THAT  
SO?

YUP, THAT'S  
SURE. A LOT OF  
BOLDS IN EGYPT  
NAMED MOHAMMED!



...EVERY TOM, DICK AND HARRY IN  
THE UNITED STATES IS NAMED BILL!

(GASP) !!!



HOWDY, OLD SMOKEY! I HEAR TELL YUH  
USED TO BE A TERRIFIC SALESMAN  
YEARS AGO AND THAT YUH ESTABLISHED  
A REPUTATION FOR SWINGING  
DIFFICULT ACCOUNTS!



THAT'S  
RIGHT, YOUNG  
FELLER!

WOULD YUH  
PLEASE TELL ME  
HOW YUH GOT  
UP THE NERVE  
TO CALL ON EXTRA  
TOUGH PROSPECTS?



IT WAS EASY, SON! I USED  
TO SAY TO MYSELF, "WHAR AM  
I ? I'M OUT HYAR! WHAR IS HE?  
HE'S IN THAR IN HIS OFFICE! ...



THEN, LAD, I'D KEEP ON  
TALKING TO MYSELF! I'D SAY,  
"WHAR DO I HAVE TO GO ? I  
HAVE TO GO IN WHAR HE IS!  
WHAT IF HE SAYS NO AND  
THROWS ME OUT..."



WHAR AM I ? OUT HYAR!  
THAT'S WHAR I AM NOW! SO  
I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!  
UNDERSTAND, SON?



YEP, OLD  
SMOKEY, IT'S A  
FINE WAY TO FIGURE!  
THANKS A LOT!











# ROPING 'N' RIDING

With



HOWDY, PARTNERS,

WHILE TRAVELING AROUND, PERHAPS YOU NOTICED THAT SOME OF THE GRASSING GRADS WAS GETTING NIFTY THIN. WELL, MAYBE YOU DIDN'T TAKE NOTICE, BUT A LOT OF RANCHERS HAVE AND THEY'RE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THEY'RE PUTTING FERTILIZER AND DUNGALDS INTO THE SOIL TO ENRICH IT BECAUSE THEY'RE THINKING OF THE YEARS AHEAD --- YEARS WHEN THEIR CATTLE WILL NEED GOOD GRASS FOR GRASSING. THEY'RE NOT LIKE TAD TOWLES AND SOME OF THE OTHER RANCHERS WERE, YEARS BACK.

TAD TOWLES ONCE HAD A FINE RANCH, GOOD GRASSING LAND AND A NICE PLOT OF CROPS --- CORN, TOMATOES, WHEAT. BUT CONSTANT USE BEGAN TO RUN THE LAND DRY, AS WE SAY OUT THIS WAY. LAND NEEDS NOURISHMENT, JUST LIKE YOU AND I OR BLACK JACK HERE. BUT TOWLES DIDN'T BOTHER LOOKING THAT FAR AHEAD. AND HE CONVINCED A LOT OF OTHER RIDERS IT WASN'T NECESSARY. THEY JUST KEPT GRASSING THEIR CATTLE AS THE GRASS GREW THINNER AND THINNER. THEIR CROPS SMALLER AND SMALLER ... ALWAYS FIGURING IT WOULD IMPROVE NEXT SEASON. BUT IT DIDN'T AND FINALLY THEIR LAND BECAME MOSTLY DRY SURFACE DIRT WITHOUT STRENGTH. IT WAS TOO LATE THEN TO START REPLENISHING THE SOIL. IT WOULD'VE TAKEN FORTY YEARS TO BRING IT BACK. TOWLES AND THE OTHERS LOST ALL THEY ONCE HAD.

AND WHY? BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T THINK AHEAD! THEY DIDN'T REALIZE THAT NOTHING CAN GO ON FOREVER WITHOUT PROPER ATTENTION AND PLANNING FOR TOMORROW. AND THAT GOES FOR EVERY WALK OF LIFE --- FROM RANCHING TO RUNNING A BUSINESS OR JUST THINKING YOUR OWN LIFE. IT'S SOMETHING WE SHOULD ALL REMEMBER! BUT NOW, PARTNERS, IT'S TIME I RODE ON. GOOD RIDING!

YOUR FELL,

*Allan "Rocky" Lane*

AND  
BLACK JACK





REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR

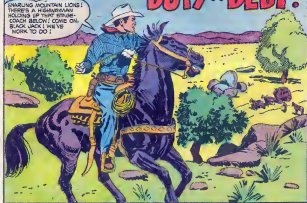
# Rocky Lane



in THE  
DOUBLE D  
DILEMMA---

## DUTY or DEBT!

SNARLING MOUNTAIN LIONS!  
THERE'S A HIGHWAYMAN  
HOLDING UP THAT STAGE-  
COACH BELOW! COME ON,  
BLACK JACK! WE'VE  
WORK TO DO!









# ROCKY LANE WESTERN



BECKON IF I TRIED TO HOLD UP  
PEOPLE TO BE  
ASHAMED TO LET ANYONE  
SEE MY FACE,  
YOO! BUT  
NOW THE HAGG-  
RADE IS  
OVER!



IT'S TIME TO UNMASK, BAW!  
I'VE SEEN YOU BEFORE SOME-  
WHERE; I'M SURE OF IT!



SURE YUH'VE SEEN ME BEFORE!  
I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YUH TILL  
NOW EITHER; YORE ALLAN LANE!  
WE USED TO PLAY  
TOGETHER WHEN  
WE WERE  
KIDS; I'M  
SPUD HALSEY!  
SURE I REMEM-  
BER YOU!



GOSH, SPUD, I FEEL AWFUL  
ABOUT THIS, BUT...

WHAT DO YUH MEAN,  
ROCKY? YORE NOT  
GOING TO TURN ME  
IN, ARE YUH?



I HAVE TO!  
I'M A MARSHAL!  
IT'S MY DUTY!

YUH MEAN YUH'VE  
FORGOTTEN THAT I  
SAVED YORE LIFE WHEN  
HE WERE KIDS!



HÖ, I HAIN'T FORGOTTEN! YOU RISKED YOUR LIFE  
TO SAVE ME FROM DROWNING IN THE RIVER WHEN I  
GOT A CRAMP; EVEN THOUGH THE UNDERBOW WAS  
VERY STRONG, YOU JUMPED  
IN AND RESCUED  
ME!



THAT'S RIGHT, ROCKY!  
AND DO YUH ALSO  
REMEMBER WHAT  
YUH SAID TO ME?

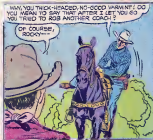
MR. YEE, SPUD, I  
PROMISED TO MAKE  
UP FOR IT SOME DAY!

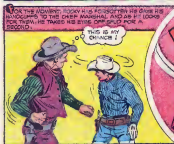




WATER-AS ROCKY IS RIDING THROUGH THE HILLS  
EN ROUTE TO THE NEXT TOWN . . .









# ROCKY LANE WESTERN



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## Tin-Star Trick

(Continued from inside front cover)

could clean out the bank thoroughly.

Mounting the horse, Thurman rode on and over the county line, and didn't pause until he'd put a good thirty miles between himself and any possible pursuit from Buckson. Then he dismounted, tied up the horse and got some much-needed rest.

In the morning he breakfasted on some wild blackberries and, just before remounting, went over the sheriff's papers.

"So I'm Mr. Joe Henry," he mused softly. "Tin-star of Buckson." He raised his teagallon back in the direction from which he'd come. "Sleep tight, Joe. I got a little appointment in Starbuck."

It was well past noon when he reached the half-way mark between Buckson and Starbuck. The money in Joe Henry's wallet bought him a meal at a settler's cabin. Then he rode on.

Near eight o'clock that night, the soft lights of Starbuck showed up on the south-west horizon. It was a busy, tight little town, Codge knew, with a railroad spur and a bank.

Ten minutes later he was centering up the main street of the town. He checked in at the local hotel.

"So you're the new tin-star from Buckson, eh?" the hotel clerk asked, as Codge Thurman signed the name "Joe Henry" in the hotel register.

Codge Thurman nodded, patted his tin star and went upstairs. He knew there was no local sheriff to worry about. Unlike Buckson, Starbuck wasn't a county seat and had none.

The next morning he rode toward the bank. A middle-aged man was unlocking the door at the stroke of ten.

"Mr. Cardie?" Codge said, touching his teagallon. He'd already ascertained the banker's name from the hotel clerk.

"That's me," the banker acknowledged.

"Dropped up from Buckson, Mr. Cardie, to warn you about a bank crook headed this way. I'm Joe Henry, tin-star of Buckson." He reached down from the saddle and shook Cardie's hand. "This bank crook's liable to strike any night—maybe tonight."

"In that case, we'll need some help," Mr. Cardie said.

"Where'd you get that?" Thurman said. "Once the secret's out, people get tense. And when the bank crook rides into town, he'll notice it and high-tail it away. I've got to trap him at your bank, Mr. Cardie, because I don't know what he looks like. My idea is, you and I stand guard tonight in the bank strong room until he shows up."

"I reckon both of us could handle him," Cardie agreed. "But—but suppose he tries a

get-away?"

Codge Thurman laughed, patted his horse's neck.

"If he does, why me and my cayuse here will see he doesn't make it. We've been through many a high-casin' chase together."

"It's good horseflesh," Mr. Cardie said approvingly. "I can tell that. I'm a horse-fancier myself—and I like 'em fast." With a peartooth eye, he appraised the cayuse. Then he nodded. "Well, all right, Sheriff Henry, if you think that's the best way to handle the situation, I'll do it. Meet you here tonight at nine." He waved good-bye and said, "Be on time."

Codge Thurman nodded and rode back to the hotel.

Shortly before nine, he remounted his horse and returned to the bank. At the door, Banker Cardie let him in and led the way to the strong room. Behind him, Codge Thurman padded noiselessly, his hands reaching for his guns.

As they entered, and Cardie turned, Thurman slammed the door behind him with a foot.

"Sleep, Mr. Cardie," he said softly. "Just put your hands up and you won't get hurt—ouch!"

The gun in his right hand spun from his grasp as a shot rang out—A hefty fat smashed down on his wrist, and he dropped the other. Cursing, Thurman stared at the iron of man lined up behind the door he'd slammed.

"What the devil . . . ?" Thurman began.

"Just townsmen. I called in to help me," Cardie said grumpy. "You're not Sheriff Henry! In fact we suspected that you murdered the real Henry and came here to rob the bank by getting me boxed up in here and makin' me open the safe!"

"Hogwash!" Thurman began. "Why, I . . . I . . ."

"You made a mistake when you said you and that horse of yours had ridden together a lot," Mr. Cardie said. "But I like good horseflesh, like I said. I gave it a sack-over, and from where I stood I saw that your horse didn't have a collar mark on his flanks. They get 'em from spurs hitting them in the same spot. That means you were lyin', probably ridin' a stolen horse. I telegraphed Buckson and heard the sheriff was missin' after fightin' out after a bank robber named Codge Thurman—with the sheriff ridin' a borrowed horse. And that horse had just been broken in—hardly ridden at all."

He looked at the trembling Thurman. "Reckon you'll have a fast ride on that nag after all—when you ride off it with a noose around your neck!"

THE END

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Dept. 284, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Please send me your BIG PRIZE BOOK... I will be first of all 25 Christmas Cards. I will send money to you for each order I place and choose my prize.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_



MAIL THIS COUPON... SEND XMAS CARDS AND EARN PRIZES LIKE THESE